

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOI/PA
DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET
FOI/PA# 1215560-1

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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : MR. A. H. BELMONT

DATE: January 15, 1959

FROM : MR. R. R. ROACH

Political matters

SUBJECT: CONFERENCE ON CUBA
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR INTELLIGENCE

On January 15, 1959, Bureau representatives sat in on the above informal conference as observers, which was held for the purpose of briefing Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (ACSI) on the Cuban situation, particularly Castro's military victory, and to develop any available biographical data on his principal military leaders.

It was ACSI's opinion that Castro's military victory was due both to Castro's successful guerrilla tactics and the incompetence of Batista's commanders. Specifically, it was pointed out that through his guerrilla tactics, Castro had cut communication lines to the extent that the Batista Army could not form coordinated tactical units in the field. Castro never did engage the Cuban Army unless the odds were on his side.

In addition, the Batista Army commanders were unable to comprehend and cope with this type of guerrilla warfare. It has been the Army's experience under the Batista regime that Batista was resentful to the establishment of a well-trained officer cadre as it posed a threat to his regime. The excuse in refusing this training, particularly here in the U. S., to Cuban officers was that the Cuban economy would not permit it. As a matter of fact, all expenses for training in this country were paid for by the U. S. Army. Following the 1952 Batista coup, Batista eliminated the higher ranking officers in the Cuban Army and appointed junior officers to command positions. This resulted in the Cuban Army being left without a trained command. It was the opinion of the Army that there was no Cuban general in the army capable of commanding a battalion as a result of this. The Army is concerned that this same situation could develop under a weak Castro Government and that the Cuban Army will continue to be graft-ridden and corrupt and built to support a man rather than its country.

At this conference, an attempt was made to develop background information on Castro and his senior officers, whose identities are presently known to the Army, for the purpose of considering subsequent contact with these individuals. The names of several of Castro's ranking commanders were mentioned and little was known about them; however, they appear to have had previous experience with Colonel Jose Rego, former Cuban Attache to Mexico whom they considered a fairly honest man and who was favorably disposed to the U. S.

*Castro's Chief of Staff

JJD:VHN:jlk (7)

1 - Mr. Belmont

1 - Mr. D. E. Moore

1 - Mr. Donahoe

1 - Mr. Nasco

1 - Liaison Section

1 - Mr. Daunt

23 JAN 23 1959

109-12-210

Memo Roach to Belmont
RE: CONFERENCE ON CUBA
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR INTELLIGENCE

~~SECRET~~

At the conclusion of the conference, three former Army attaches to Cuba commented that they felt that the Army's attaches should get out of the collection of political intelligence and concentrate on strictly military data. It was pointed out by Colonel Denholm, Chief, Collection Division, that this now is policy at ACSI throughout its attache system. These former Army attaches to Cuba also complained of the lack of coordination and collection activity on the part [redacted]. The attaches felt that their hands had been tied [redacted] in this area. Colonel Denholm pointed out that this situation had also been corrected and that they are now receiving full cooperation from [redacted] (S)(U)

b7E

The Army is seriously concerned with the Cuban situation and is particularly desirous of identifying the "strong man" who will immerge from the Castro Government. They feel, of course, that this will be a military man.

ACTION:

For your information.

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten mark]

No doubt just as preparing to tell ours.

b7E

~~SECRET~~

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : A. H. Belmont

DATE: 1/18/59

FROM : S. B. Donahoe
Political MATTER - Cuba
SUBJECT: CUBAN POLITICAL SITUATION

1 - Mr. Belmont
1 - Mr. Donahoe
1 - Mr. Nasca
1 - Mr. Wannall

Tolson
Boardman
Belmont
Mohr
Nease
Parsons
Rosen
Tamm
Trotter
W.C. Sullivan
Tele. Room
Holloman
Gandy

In connection with my memorandum 1/17/59 prepared for use of Director in meeting with Under Secretary of State Herter on 1/19/59, Mr. Tolson requested further information.

1. Mr. Tolson inquired whether, as mentioned on page 9, Mrs. Catherine Taaffe actually went to Cuba or whether she is going.

Answer:

Special Agent S. R. Burns, New York Office (NYO), advised 1/18/59 that Catherine Taaffe departed New York City for Havana, Cuba, at 2:25 p.m., 1/18/59. Prior to leaving, Mrs. Taaffe advised that on 1/16/59 she had spoken to William Wieland, United States Department of State, and told him of her invitation to come to Cuba. Wieland agreed with her that it would be advantageous for her to consult with the new Cuban Government and for her to go to Havana. Mrs. Taaffe advised she is to be met in Havana by Alberto Fernandez, head of the Sugar Institute in Havana. She will also speak to President Manuel Urrutia and Dr. Antonio de la Carrera, secretary to President Urrutia. Fernandez and De la Carrera also want Mrs. Taaffe to speak to Fidel Castro but she stated she will not go out of her way to speak to Castro as she desires to speak to only the civilian members of the new Cuban Government. Mrs. Taaffe stressed she is going to Havana at the request of Fernandez and only as a friend of the Cuban people.

Mrs. Taaffe stated that the Cuban Government was most pleased with the appointment of Phillip W. Bonsal as the new United States Ambassador to Cuba. She said that Fernandez, on 1/16/59, had advised that the Cuban Government was at that time still hoping that Mr. William Wieland of the United States State Department would be appointed ambassador even if only on an interim basis because of Wieland's background, life in Cuba and general knowledge and understanding of Latin affairs.

Mrs. Taaffe stated she has heard rumors, which are at present unsubstantiated, that former Cuban President Fulgencio Batista is attempting to determine how many supporters he can gather in an effort to overthrow the new government. Mrs. Taaffe stated she has learned that a shipment of 2,000 M-1 rifles, purchased and paid for by the Cuban Government prior to 1/1/59, is now in Italy.

109-12-210

DEM-

SBD:smk

66 FEB 4 1959

JAN 26 1959

Memorandum from Mr. Donahoe to Mr. Belmont
Re: Cuban Political Situation

According to Mrs. Taaffe, rumors indicate that Batista and his followers will attempt a coup in about four or five months as they feel the new government will be at its weakest point at that time. Above data from Taaffe furnished State Department 1-18-59.

2. Mr. Tolson inquired whether Roberto Fernandez, head of Havana Sugar Institute and member of new cabinet (mentioned on page 9), is identical or related to Alberto Fernandez Hechavarria, also known as Alberto Fernandez or Albert Casas, mentioned on page 13 as subject of Registration Act case by Bureau.

Should not have been resolved before asked
for info.
Answer:

Special Agent Burns, NYO, advised 1/18/59 that Roberto Fernandez is identical with Alberto Fernandez. Mrs. Taaffe has in the past referred to Fernandez as both Roberto and Alberto but New York investigation has indicated that Alberto is the correct name. Mrs. Taaffe has advised that Fernandez was in New York City but left during the early part of January, 1959, and returned to Cuba.

3. With regard to Alberto Fernandez Hechavarria, mentioned on page 13, Mr. Tolson inquired concerning our investigation of Fernandez and whether we had information which was not disseminated prior to the overthrow of the Cuban Government on 1/1/59.

Answer:

On 10/30/58 we received from the State Department a copy of a telegram from the United States Embassy, Havana, dated 10/29/58 indicating the Francisco Sugar Company (Cuba) had been instructed by representatives of the July 26th Movement to make a 15 cents per day payment on 1958 crops to Alberto Casas in Miami. The telegram indicated the Company would refuse to pay but suggested the Justice Department might be interested in the collection of money in Miami by Casas. Bureau airtel 11/4/58 instructed Miami to immediately identify Casas to determine whether his activities brought him within purview of Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended (acting within United States as agent of foreign principal).

Internal Security Division of Department, by letter 11/10/58, received 11/12/58, forwarded copy of letter to Internal Security Division from State Department dated 11/6/58 enclosing memorandum of conversation 10/25/58 between Mr. Rubottom of State Department and Mr. Braga, President of Francisco Sugar Company, New York. Therein Braga indicated his company in Cuba was being harassed by Castro rebels (Castro had control of rich sugar crop areas of Cuba) and that

Memorandum from Mr. Donahoe to Mr. Belmont
Re: Cuban Political Situation

Alberto Fernandez had visited various companies in New York asking tribute for rebels. Mr. Rubottom said position should be not to pay tribute and that attitude toward rebels had been toughened. State Department letter indicated Fernandez was possibly identical with Casas mentioned in telegram, copy of which they had previously sent Internal Security Division.

Neither State Department nor Internal Security Division in letters mentioned above requested investigation but we had already started. Bureau letter 11/20/58 sent this information to New York and Miami, instructing New York to determine if Fernandez and Casas were identical.

Internal Security Division, by letter 11/25/58 to Bureau, referred to data previously transmitted and requested Registration Act investigation. Bureau letter 12/2/58 advised New York and Miami of request, instructed New York to determine whether Fernandez soliciting money for Cuban rebels and whether witnesses available to testify and instructed prompt submission of report.

New York, by airtel 12/12/58, forwarded memorandum in connection with another matter which indicated, among other things, that B. Rionda Braga was interviewed 12/9/58. Braga indicated various sugar companies under his control had on 12/4/58 paid \$361,039.97 to Alberto Fernandez Hechavarria in New York in response to Castro demands for payment of 15 cents per bag for production of raw sugar in 1958 in hope this would stop damages to company properties in Cuba. This memorandum was disseminated to Internal Security Division, State Department, [redacted] Customs and military agencies on 12/19/58. b7E

Why did it take from Dec 29 to Jan 2 for A.D. with Belmont?
New York Office submitted report 12/22/58, received at Bureau 12/29/58 and in this Division 1/2/59. This report reflected complete interview with Braga, J. S. Levene of the Francisco Sugar Company and George E. Diethelm of American Sugar Refining Company. Braga and Levene furnished details of payment of money to Fernandez but had no information as to whereabouts of Fernandez except that he was possibly in Miami. Diethelm said his company had made no payments to Cuban rebels.

Above New York report had date discrepancy in details and synopsis. Bureau airtel 1/9/59 asked clarification and New York airtel 1/12/59 furnished corrective data. Copy of report sent

A lapse of one week in Belmont's Div - why?

K

Memorandum from Mr. Donahoe to Mr. Belmont
Re: Cuban Political Situation

State Department, 1/16/59 and copy delivered [redacted] b7E
[redacted] Copy being sent 1/19/59 to Internal Security
Division, calling attention to present position of Fernandez as head
of Sugar Institute in Cuba and as member of cabinet there, to the
information furnished [redacted] and requesting advice as to whether
further investigation is desired.

4. Mr. Tolson inquired whether Bureau informant mentioned
on page 21 went to Cuba and took job with Castro government or
whether he is going.

Answer:

This refers to Miami informant [redacted] b6
Bureau teletype to Miami, 1/12/59, instructed that informant be told b7C
question of going to Cuba and accepting position is matter of person's b7D
decision and if he goes it should be clear he is not going on behalf
of Bureau. Miami was instructed that if he went and accepted position
to submit recommendations as to use. Assistant Special Agent in
Charge [redacted] Miami Office, advised on 1/18/59 that informant
has not returned to Cuba and does not intend to accept position in
Cuban Government on his own volition but is willing to do so. He
intends to get contract to supply civilian aircraft to Cuban Air
Force with financial backing of Angel Perez Vidal, a former July 26th
Movement leader in New York who is now reportedly in charge
Presidential Palace in Havana.

A separate memorandum is being submitted regarding the
analysis of the Fulton Lewis, Jr., column mentioned on page 12a of
our prior memorandum.

ACTION:

For information.

over *Q*

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : A. H. Belmont

DATE: January 19, 1959

FROM : S. B. Donahoe *LD*
Political matters. Cuban
 SUBJECT: CUBAN POLITICAL SITUATION

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 1/23/99 BY 60267 N/A/DAK

Tolson _____
 Boardman _____
 Belmont _____
 Mohr _____
 Nease _____
 Parsons _____
 Rosen _____
 Tamm _____
 Trotter _____
 W.C. Sullivan _____
 Tele. Room _____
 Holloman _____
 Gandy _____

Concerning my memorandum 1/17/59 prepared for Director's use in meeting with Under Secretary of State Herter and my memorandum 1/18/59 supplying further information regarding prior data furnished, the Director asked several questions, answers to which are set forth herein.

Director asked that analysis and file review of Fulton Lewis, Jr. column be expedited. This was completed over weekend and delivered to Director's office at 9 a.m., Monday, 1/19/59. Project entailed review of about 1,500 references and required over 115 hours of Special Agent time and 30 hours of clerical time in this Section alone on Saturday and Sunday, as well as extensive services of Records Branch personnel.

Director inquired as to just when receipts were received by sugar companies in New York for monies given to Alberto Fernandez Hechavarria on 12/4/58. These receipts were dated 12/7/58. B. Rionda Braga, who supplied this information on 12/9/58, did not say when they were actually received.

Director instructed that we expedite getting some ruling from Internal Security Division on Alberto Fernandez Hechavarria case. We have sent through today for approval letter to Internal Security Division, transmitting report, calling to attention his position as head of Sugar Institute and member of Cabinet in Cuba and asking whether further investigation desired in view of his reported position. This will be hand delivered and Internal Security Division will be pressed for expedite ruling.

Director inquired, in reading my memorandum of 1/16/59, why it took from 11/25/58, when we initiated investigation in Alberto Fernandez Hechavarria case, until 1/16/59 to send report to State Department until 1/19/59 to send report to Department when Fernandez appeared and demanded monies b7E

109-12-210

- 1 - Belmont
- 1 - Nease
- 1 - Donahoe
- 1 - Nasca

SBD:bbr

(5)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 1/23/99 BY 60267 N/A/DAK

8 JAN 26 1959

60 FEB 2 1959

109-12-210-396

SAA

Memorandum for A. H. Belmont
Re: Cuban Political Situation

on 12/4/58. As mentioned in my memorandum 1/18/59, we actually instructed that investigation of Fernandez be conducted on 11/4/58, on our own initiative, prior to receipt of Department's request 11/25/58. Initial results of key interview with Braga on 12/9/58 reflecting money demand and payment on 12/4/58 were submitted by New York airtel 12/12/58, received 12/13/58. Buairtel 12/16/58 requested clarification of other data not directly related to this interview. [New York airtel 12/18/58 clarified and memorandum disseminated to Department, State Department [redacted] 12/19/58.] Thus, the real key data (X) here was in the hands of [redacted] New York report 12/22/58 containing complete results of Braga interview and other interviews was received at Bureau 12/29/58 and in this Division 1/2/59, day after Batista fell. Regarding delay in disseminating report there were several factors. Report was reviewed and required Bureau airtel to New York 1/9/59 to clarify date discrepancy in details and synopsis and New York airtel 1/12/59 furnished corrective data. Director asked why there was a lapse of 1 week in Division (January 2-9) from date of receipt to date of request for clarification. This report hit Section handling Cuban matters one day after Batista fled and Castro forces assumed control. Voluminous intelligence data was being received requiring telephonic and confirming letter dissemination on an urgent basis regarding current revolutionary situation. This had measurable effect on efforts to get other work, such as this report, handled and was primary reason why we did not get the report disseminated to State and [redacted] until 1/16/59 and to Internal Security Division until 1/19/59. In latter instance we desired to pose in cover letter issue raised by [redacted] and solicit advice as to further investigation.

b7E

While we threw manpower into this situation to keep on top of daily developments nevertheless in this case, recognizing that Castro man was here and collecting money and in light of subsequent developments we fully recognize this case should have been more aggressively pushed and the dissemination delays avoided. That we did not do so is indeed regretted and factors outlined are in no sense intended as an excuse.

Director also asked why it took from 12/29/58 to 1/2/59 for above report to reach Belmont after receipt in Bureau. Records Branch stamp on report indicates it was received sometime during day of 12/29/58. It was completely

Memorandum for A. H. Belmont
Re: Cuban Political Situation

processed and forwarded to this Division where received on third workday after receipt (holiday, 1/1/59, intervening). Records Branch advises that with few exceptions mail is being completely processed through that Branch in two days. This took slightly longer since leave schedule in Records Branch was heavier than usual and date of receipt, 12/29/58, was first workday after 4-day holiday and mail was unusually heavy.

Certainly a matter such as this should have been expedited.
Director raised question of whether we shouldn't have resolved whether Roberto Fernandez, head of Sugar Institute and member of new Cabinet, might be identical with or related to Alberto Fernandez Hechavarria before Director asked for it. We have determined they are identical and we should have resolved this before presenting data. Frankly, we did not recognize possibility in view of common name "Fernandez" but facts pointed to possibility, we had data available to Director and fact that we did not recognize and resolve this is sincerely regretted.

ACTION:

As reflected in previous data supplied to the Director we have concentrated on the Cuban situation and there has been voluminous data developed by Bureau and disseminated to other agencies. We have made a conscientious effort to meet responsibilities of Bureau and sincerely regret it was necessary for the Director to raise questions and inquire into delays.

1. We certainly did not spend the pressure on this entire matter and should have in view of its vital importance.

2. Also in memo of Jan. 17 I sense a strong trend to undercut the communist character of Castro's movement. Eliminating all allegations of Batista the memo attempts to substantially establish that Fidel & Raul Castro, Guevaras, Juvarez, Diaz Morales & Morales Gonzalez are all communists & all top leaders in Castro movement. What more is needed to prove its true character.

1 - Mr. Little
1 - Mr. Nasca
1 - Mr. Mossburg

January 21, 1959

BY COURIER SERVICE

3/30/99 60267 NS/BCE/OK 9-23-99

Honorable Christian A. Herter
Under Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington 25, D. C.

29065
Political (Matter)
Cuba

My dear Mr. Herter:

In connection with our discussion on January 19, 1959, regarding the Cuban situation and particularly concerning information which we have been receiving from Mrs. Catherine Taaffe, I thought you would be interested in knowing she called our New York Office from Havana, Cuba, on January 19, 1959, and stated she had spent eight hours at the Sugar Institute and two and one-half hours at the Presidential Palace but had not been in contact with the American Embassy in Havana. It was stated she had conferred with Alberto Fernandez, head of the Sugar Institute; Roberto Agramonte, Minister of State; Dr. Antonio de la Carrera, Presidential Secretary; Jose Llanusa, Mayor of Havana; and many others. She stated the situation in Cuba is chaotic and the government is desperate for assistance and guidance from the United States.

According to Mrs. Taaffe, United States Ambassador Philip W. Bonsal will be warmly and sincerely welcomed in Cuba as the Cubans are well pleased over his selection. She added Dr. Manuel Urrutia is a mere "figurehead" in the present Cuban Government and has no power other than to reorganize the judicial system. Mrs. Taaffe added that one Lodo, whose full name she was unable to furnish, formerly in charge of the Sugar Instituto, was jailed on January 19, 1959.

JAN 21 1 41 PM '59
REC'D-READING ROOM
FBI

BY COURIER SVC
13 JAN 22
COMM-FBI

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- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- Nease _____
- Parsons _____
- Rosen _____
- Tamm _____
- Trotter _____
- Clayton _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____
- W. A. Sullivan _____

67 JAN 28 1959

MAIL ROOM ☐

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JAN 22 1959
SP/Scm

29066

Honorable Christian A. Herter

Continuing, Mrs. Taaffe stated that the Cuban Government "desires the United States to make a higher reallocation of sugar" and if Ambassador Bonsal on arrival in Cuba would offer temporary financial aid to the new government, it would be a great gesture toward improving United States - Cuba relations. According to Mrs. Taaffe, the Cuban Government will not recognize Russia but it is deeply concerned over the communist threat and she further stated Cuba is desperately in need of technical assistants in the fields of education and agriculture.

Mrs. Taaffe added that the military trials are temporarily being held up and when they are resumed they will be open to the public and held in Havana and the defendants will have legal counsel. She stated all persons contacted by her requested that she speak with Fidel Castro, which she agreed to do although she does not actually desire to speak with him and added that he is at present in Pinar del Rio.

Mrs. Taaffe also stated she had an appointment to speak with Commandant Camilo Cienfuegos at Camp Columbia on January 20, 1959. She added that the Cuban Government is bitter "toward the United States military missions" as it is felt they were too close to Batista and stated that if the individuals in charge of the United States military missions are not recalled soon the new Cuban Government will ask that they leave. According to Mrs. Taaffe, former American Ambassador Earl E. T. Smith paid his respects at the palace on January 19, 1959, prior to departing from Cuba, at which time he was rudely treated and afforded only three minutes to pay his respects inasmuch as he was disliked by the Cuban people.

~~256~~
29067
Honorable Christian A. Herter

Mrs. Taaffe added that she has been warmly received by the Cubans and her opinions on many problems and questions are constantly being sought. She also stated that the Castro forces desire close relations with the United States but that, due to things they did in the United States while trying to overthrow the Government of Batista, they are ashamed to ask the United States for aid.

I have made this information available to the Honorable Richard M. Nixon; the Attorney General; the Office of Security, Department of State; [redacted] the Department of the Army; the Department of the Navy; and the Department of the Air Force.

b7E

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

Routing Slip
FD-4 (Rev. 6-14-56)

Date **1/22/59**

To

☒ Director

FILE #

Att. **FOREIGN LIAISON**

☐ SAC

Title

☐ ASAC

☐ Supv.

☐ Agent

☐ SE

☐ CC

☐ Steno

☐ Clerk

ACTION DESIRED

☐ Acknowledge

☐ Assign Reassign

☐ Bring file

☐ Call me

☐ Correct

☐ Deadline

☐ Deadline passed

☐ Delinquent

☐ Expedite

☐ File

☐ Initial & return

☐ Leads need attention

☐ Open Case

☐ Return with explanation or notation as to action taken.

☐ Prepare lead cards

☐ Prepare tickler

☐ Recharge serials

☐ Return assignment card

☐ Return file

☐ Return serials

☐ Search and return

☐ See me

☐ Send Serials

to

☐ Submit new charge-out

☐ Submit report by

☐ Type

EMBASSY WEEKA #3, 1/20/59

☒

LEGAT

HAVANA

Office

109-12-210-

NOT RECORDED

13 FEB 2 1959

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE **3/30/99** BY **60267MS/BCE/1085**

60267 MS/BCE/RK 9-23-99

67 FEB 2 - 1959

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : MR. A. H. BELMONT *also*

DATE: January 21, 1959

FROM : MR. D. E. MOORE

cc Mr. Belmont
Mr. Donahoe
Mr. Nasca
Mr. BartlettSUBJECT: *Political matters*
CUBAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES
INTERNAL SECURITY - CUBATolson _____
Boardman _____
Belmont _____
Mohr _____
Nease _____
Parsons _____
Rosen _____
Tamm _____
Trotter _____
W.C. Sullivan _____
Tele. Room _____
Holloman _____
Gandy _____

ASAC [] NYO, advised at approximately 11:30 ^{A.M.}, 1-21-59 that Detective [] of the Bureau of Special Services, New York City Police Department, had advised the NYO this morning that a group of Cubans in NYC are going to picket the United Nations Headquarters between 4:00 and 5:30 PM on the afternoon of 1-21-59. [] stated that the picketing was to be under the direction of [] ASAC [] advised that [] was a member of the July 26 Movement in NYC.

b6
b7CACTION:

The above information was telephonically furnished to Mr. [] of the State Department by O. H. Bartlett and will be confirmed in writing.

b6
b7C

DEM:td (5)

one auto copy
1-27-59
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DATE 3/30/99 BY 60267 NLS/BCE/PAK 9-2389

b7E

REC-7 109-12-210-400

23 JAN 26 1959

EX-123

JAN 27 1959

RECORDED COPY FILED IN

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

JAN 20 1959

TELETYPE

Mr. Tolson	_____
Mr. Belmont	_____
Mr. Mohr	_____
Mr. Nease	_____
Mr. Parsons	_____
Mr. Rosen	_____
Mr. Tamm	_____
Mr. Trotter	_____
Mr. W.C. Sullivan	_____
Tele. Room	_____
Mr. Holloman	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

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DATE 3/30/99 BY 60267NCS/BL/PK 93399

URGENT 1-20-59 1-22 AM GPU

TO DIRECTOR 2

FROM SAC NEW YORK 3P

Political MATTERS. CUBA

CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES, FPM DASH CUBA. MRS. CATHERINE TAAFFE
TELEPHONICALLY ADVISED FROM HAVANA, CUBA, AT TEN TEN PM

INSTANT THAT SHE SPENT EIGHT HOURS AT SUGAR INSTITUTE AND TWO AND A
HALF HOURS AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. SHE HAS NOT BEEN IN CONTACT WITH
US EMBASSY HAVANA. AMONG PEOPLE SHE SPOKE WITH, ALBERTO FERNANDEZ,
HEAD OF SUGAR INSTITUTE, ROBERTO AGRAMONTE, MINISTER OF STATE,
DOCTOR ANTONIO DE LA CARRERA, PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY, JOSE LLANUSA,
MAYOR OF HAVANA AND MANY OTHERS. MRS. TAAFFE ADVISED SITUATION IN
CUBA CHAOTIC AND GOVERNMENT IS DESPERATE FOR ASSISTANCE AND GUIDANCE
OF US. MRS. TAAFFE FURNISHED FOLLOWING, US AMBASSADOR PHILIP W. BONSALE
WILL BE WARMLY AND SINCERELY WELCOMED AS CUBANS ARE WELL PLEASED WITH
CHOICE OF BONSALE. DR. MANUEL URRUTIA IS MERE FIGURE HEAD, HAS NO POWER
AND ONLY JOB IS TO REORGANIZE THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM. FNU LODO WHO WAS
IN CHARGE OF SUGAR INSTITUTE WAS JAILED THIS DATE. CUBA DESIRES US TO
MAKE HIGHER RE-ALLOCATION OF SUGAR, AND IF AMBASSADOR BONSALE WILL COME TO

END PAGE ONE

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State rally

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PAGE TWO

CUBA AND MAKE OFFER OF TEMPORARY FINANCIAL AID TO NEW GOVERNMENT IT
WILL BE GREATEST GESTURE TO IMPROVE US DASH CUBA RELATIONS. ^{According to me} CUBAN
GOVERNMENT WILL NOT RECOGNIZE RUSSIA BUT ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER
COMMUNIST THREAT. CUBA DESPERATELY NEEDS TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS IN FIELDS
OF EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURE. ^P THE MILITARY TRIALS ARE TEMPORARILY
HELD UP AND WHEN RESUMED, WILL BE OPEN TO PUBLIC, HELD IN HAVANA AND
DEFENDENTS WILL HAVE LEGAL COUNSEL. ^{was called in} ALL ASKED MRS. TAAFFE TO SPEAK
WITH FIDEL CASTRO, WHICH SHE SAID SHE WOULD DO, BUT DOES NOT REALLY
DESIRE TO. MRS. TAAFFE HAS APPOINTMENT TO SPEAK WITH COMMANDANT ^J
CAMILO CIENFUEGOS AT CAMP COLUMBIA ON ONE DASH TWO ZERO DASH FIVE
NINE. ⁹ CASTRO AT PRESENT, IS IN PINAR DEL RIO. MRS. TAAFFE ADVISED
CUBAN GOVERNMENT IS BITTER TOWARD US MILITARY MISSIONS AS THEY FEEL THEY
WERE TOO CLOSE TO BATISTA. IF THE PEOPLE IN CHARGE OF US MILITARY
MISSIONS ARE NOT RECALLED SOON, THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL ASK THEM TO
LEAVE. MRS. TAAFFE ADVISED FORMER AMBASSADOR EARLY ^F T. SMITH PAID HIS
RESPECTS AT THE PALACE THIS DATE PRIOR TO LEAVING CUBA AND WAS RUDELY
TREATED AND GIVEN ONLY THREE MINUTES TO PAY HIS RESPECTS AS HE
WAS SO MUCH DISLIKED BY THE CUBAN PEOPLE. MRS. TAAFFE STATED SHE WAS
END PAGE TWO

PAGE THREE

WARMLY RECEIVED BY THE CUBANS AND HER OPINION ON MANY PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS ARE CONSTANTLY BEING SOUGHT. MRS. TAAFFE ADVISED THE ^{Cubans for} CUBANS WANT CLOSE RELATIONS WITH US BUT FEEL "THAT DUE TO THINGS THEY DID IN US WHILE TRYING TO OVERTHROW GOVERNMENT OF BATISTA THEY ARE ASHAMED TO ASK THE US FOR AID." BUREAU WILL BE KEPT ADVISED OF FURTHER INFO AS RECEIVED FROM MRS. TAAFFE AND OTHER SOURCES.

END AND ACK PLS

NY R 2 WA ELR

9 A.M. 1/20/59

Info orally to

State

QRB

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Tolson ✓
 Belmont ✓
 Mohr ✓
 Nease ✓
 Parsons ✓
 Rosen ✓
 Tamm ✓
 Trotter ✓
 W.C. Sullivan ✓
 Tele. Room ✓
 Holloman ✓
 Gandy ✓
 Moore ✓

☐ Airgram

☒ Cablegram

URGENT

1-23-59

60267NLS/BCE/RK 93099
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 DATE 3/30/99 BY 60267NLS/BCE/RB

TO DIRECTOR

FROM LEGAT, HAVANA

NO. 596

MATTERS CUBA
 CUBAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, CASTRO IN FIVE HOUR PRESS CONFERENCE

YESTERDAY CLAIMED MONOPOLISTIC UNITED STATES PRESS WIRE SERVICES NOT TELLING TRUTH RE NECESSITY FOR EXECUTIONS. CLAIMED WAS NOT A COMMUNIST BUT WANTED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE FOR CUBA. CONDEMNED SOME AMERICAN BIG BUSINESS INTERESTS ESPECIALLY UNITED FRUIT COMPANY STATING HAD NOT PAID TAXES TO REBELS WHEN REBELS IN CONTROL OF ORIENTE PROVINCE. STATED COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY MILITARY MISSIONS SHOULD ALWAYS COME FROM UNITED STATES AND THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE ONE FROM VENEZUELA. EVIDENT FROM PRESS COMMENTS ON CASTRO'S REMARKS THAT THERE IS SOME SELF-IMPOSED CUBAN PRESS CENSORSHIP. TRIALS OF QUOTE "WAR CRIMINALS" UNQUOTE STARTED HAVANA YESTERDAY. HELD AT SPORTS COLESEUM. WITNESSED BY 17,000 PERSONS WITH FULL RADIO AND TELEVISION COVERAGE. DEFENDANT, AN ARMY MAJOR, CONFRONTED WITH OVER 50 WITNESSES MOST OF WHOM COULD FURNISH ONLY HEARSAY EVIDENCE. HE ADMITTED SOME KILLINGS BUT STATED ALL DONE IN LINE OF DUTY. TRIAL LASTED 8 HOURS. DEFENDANT SENTENCED TO BE SHOT AFTER 3 HOUR DELIBERATION. BELIEF IS THAT CONDEMNATION ON PART OF WORLD PRESS AGAINST EXECUTIONS HAS SLOWED SOME. CASTRO CONTINUES TO EXPRESS ANTI AMERICAN AND NATIONALISTIC SENTIMENTS. NO PUBLIC CRITICISM HERE OF EXECUTIONS. GOVERNMENT OFFICES CONTINUE DISORGANIZED DUE TO COMPLETE TURNOVER IN PERSONNEL AND

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66 JAN 29 1959

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JAN 27 1959

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W.C. Sullivan _____
Tele. Room _____
Holloman _____
Gandy _____

☐ Airgram

☒ Cablegram

PAGE TWO HAVANA NR: 596

HESITANCY OF OFFICIALS TO MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT CONFIRMATION
FROM CASTRO.

JAMES T. HAVERTY

RECEIVED: 1-23-59 5:58 PM ECD

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : MR. TOLSON

DATE: January 20, 1959

FROM : G. A. NEASE

SUBJECT: Political Matters - Cuba

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 Mohr _____
 Nease _____
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 W.C. Sullivan _____
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 Holloman _____
 Gandy _____

With regard to the pink memorandum from the Director's Office today concerning former Legal Attache John Wachter, Havana, having a building pass admitting him into headquarters for Cuban Intelligence, Mr. McGuire at 6:30 PM tonight advised David Lawrence of U. S. News and World Report that we had heard his man, Albert Meyers, had information that five Americans had such passes from Cuban Intelligence and we wanted him to know that all that this amounted to was a building pass into Cuban Intelligence quarters. Lawrence stated this was perfectly normal and would be expected of American Embassy personnel to have entree into areas of the government in whose country they were serving.

Lawrence made a quick check and called Mr. McGuire back advising that his man, Meyers, had turned the story down, that what had happened was that a Cuban newspaperman had planted the story that there were five American spies for Batista who had entree into Cuban Intelligence and that Meyers had checked it out, found it to be a phony planted story and, accordingly, had turned it down. Mr. Belmont has been so advised.

1 - Mr. Belmont

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The Director

January 20, 1959

A. H. Belmont

CHRISTIAN A. HERTER
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

At 5:30 p.m., today, Mr. Bartlett of the Liaison Section briefed Under Secretary of State Herter concerning the information furnished to the New York Office today involving Haiti. Mr. Herter asked Mr. Bartlett to express his appreciation to the Director for furnishing this information to him so promptly and further asked that the Director be advised that he deeply appreciates the Director's taking his valuable time as he did on January 19, 1959, to brief Mr. Herter on the Cuban situation. Mr. Herter was advised that this would be done.

ACTION:

For information.

- 1 - Mr. Belmont
- 1 - Liaison
- 1 - Mr. Bartlett

OHB:tw
(5)

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0 Political Matters Cuba

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- Trotter _____
- Clayton _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____
- W. C. Sullivan _____

John

66 JAN 29 1959

MAIL ROOM ☐

Mr. Tolson ☒
 Mr. Belmont ☒
 Mr. Mohr ☒
 Mr. Nease ☒
 Mr. Parsons ☒
 Mr. Rosen ☒
 Mr. Tamm ☒
 Mr. Trotter ☒
 Mr. W.C. Sullivan ☒
 Tele. Room ☒
 Mr. Holloman ☒
 Miss Gandy ☒

o Political MATTERS-
Cuba

It is significantly not
 specific. *[Signature]*

UPI -70

(CUBA)

HAVANA--FIDEL CASTRO HAS THROWN OUT THE COMMUNISTS WHO INFILTRATED THE CUBAN LABOR UNION LEADERSHIP IN THE HECTIC FIRST DAYS OF THE REBEL VICTORY, IT WAS DISCLOSED TODAY.

THE REBEL CHIEFTAIN FORCED A REORGANIZATION OF THE CUBAN NATIONAL LABOR FRONT AND WORKERS CONFEDERATION BEFORE HE DEPARTED YESTERDAY ON A WEEKEND TRIP TO CARACAS, VENEZUELA. FIVE REDS WERE REPORTED FORCED OUT OF THE LABOR LEADERSHIP.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT TOOK STEPS TO TONE DOWN THE SPECTACLE OF THE HAVANA "WAR CRIMES" TRIALS. SOURCES PREDICTED THAT NO MORE TRIALS WOULD BE HELD IN THE BIG SPORTS STADIUM WHERE BATISTA ARMY MAJ. JESUS SOSA BLANCO WAS CONDEMNED EARLY YESTERDAY AFTER A 12-HOUR AND 19 MINUTE TRIAL WITNESSED BY 30,000 JEERING SPECTATORS.

THE TRIALS OF TWO OTHER TOP BATISTA HENCHMEN, MAJ. PEDRO MOREJON VALDES AND LT. COL. RICARDO L. GRAU, POSTPONED UNTIL MONDAY, WERE EXPECTED TO BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE SPORTS STADIUM TO THE PRIVACY OF CABANA FORTRESS.

MAJ. SOSA BLANCO'S APPEAL FROM HIS DEATH SENTENCE WAS FORMALLY RECEIVED BY THE SUPERIOR WAR COURT, IT WAS REPORTED. IT WAS TO BE ACTED UPON EARLY NEXT WEEK.

THE CONDEMNED MAN, SAID IN HIS CELL AT CABANA FORTRESS THAT HE HOPED HIS TRIAL--WHICH HE HAD COMPARED TO THE MARTYRDOM OF CHRISTIANS IN THE ROMAN COLISEUM--WOULD BE THE LAST OF ITS KIND IN CUBA.

"I HAVE NEVER BEEN AFRAID OF DEATH," SOSA BLANCO SAID. "NOW THAT I HAVE BEEN CONFERRED (BY A PRIEST) I FEAR DEATH EVEN LESS.

"IF MY DEATH MEANS THE HAPPINESS OF CUBA, LET THEM SHOOT ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE."

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51 JAN 30 1959

WASHINGTON CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Office Memorandum

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI

FROM : Legal Attache, Havana (66-101)

SUBJECT: INTELLIGENCE SURVEY - CUBA

DATE: January 15, 1959

62264

Mr. Tolson ☒

Mr. Belmont ☒

Mr. Mohr ☒

Mr. Parsons ☒

Mr. Rosen ☒

Mr. Tamm ☒

Mr. W.C. Sullivan ☒

Tele. Room ☒

Mr. Holloman ☒

Miss Gandy ☒

Submitted herewith are an original and six copies of a memorandum captioned as above.

All information contained in this memorandum is already known to appropriate Embassy officials, including the writer. It is to be noted that in many instances the personal opinions of the writer have been set forth, based on information received from sources of this office.

No dissemination of the memorandum as such has been made locally. It is classified "Confidential" inasmuch as it reflects information obtained from confidential sources of this office in Cuba.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

January 15, 1959

INTELLIGENCE SURVEY - CUBA

SYNOPSIS

During final days of December, 1958, BATISTA armed forces led by General JOSE ELEUTERIO PEDRAZA made dying gasp to stop rebel advance. Air Force indiscriminately bombed Cuban towns and cities held by rebels. The flight of Government officials was fore-shadowed by attempts on part of a number of them to secure U. S. visas. News of BATISTA flight at 3:30 A.M., January 1 spread at first slowly throughout city but by 11:00 A.M. crowds of vandals began acts of terrorism. Militia of July 26, however, had restored order by nightfall, although sacking of homes of pro-BATISTA elements continued for several days. Embassy began immediate plans for evacuation of approximately 2,200 tourists, which evacuation completed within a 4-day period. Although caretaker government had been left by BATISTA in person of General EULOGIO CANTILLO PORRAS, July 26 forces actually controlled country. Provisional President MANUEL URRUTIA arrived Havana January 5, but his planned triumphal entry marred when members of Directorio Revolucionario refused to give up Palace, claiming had not received adequate representation in Provisional Government. Provisional Government completely July 26 dominated. FIDEL CASTRO entered Havana January 8 and in mass rally asked for all to back Provisional Government. Approximately 200 BATISTA followers executed to date, and Cuban leaders, including FIDEL CASTRO, very vehement in statements against those who attack such mass executions. Several of FIDEL CASTRO's lieutenants in prominent positions have made anti-United States remarks and stated that they were not anti-Communists. Communists have commenced republication of daily newspaper "Hoy" and have made inroads in capturing important positions in labor unions. Files of Bureau for Repression of Communist Activities presently under control of Commander ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA, prominent CASTRO aide and an Argentinian who is definitely anti-American. He states he will burn same. CASTRO through intemperate remarks has fanned anti-U.S. feeling. Prominent Cuban magazine, "Bohemia", in issue of 1,000,000 copies carried scathing attack against U. S. Ambassador EARL E. T. SMITH. CASTRO idol of mobs but some thinking people have indicated that he talks too much and attempts to completely control Provisional Government. Gambling casinos closed but some top hoodlums with gambling interests remain in Havana. Government officials in statements have vacillated with respect to their ideas concerning reopening of gambling establishments, but CASTRO now states some will reopen under Government supervision.

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ENCLOSURE



United States Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation

January 15, 1959

INTELLIGENCE SURVEY - CUBA

FLIGHT OF PAST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

In the closing days of December, 1958, the BATISTA forces in a last-gasp effort to delay the rebel forces called from retirement General JOSE ELEUTERIO PEDRAZA and appointed him a member of the Army General Staff. PEDRAZA had been in retirement for approximately 17 years and formerly had been Army Chief of Staff (1939 to 1941) and also Chief of Police. He was retired from active service in 1941 when he attempted to seize control of the Government from BATISTA. In 1958 PEDRAZA's son was killed, reportedly by the rebels. Sources advise that PEDRAZA, during his time in Government service, was considered to be ruthless in his dealings with enemies of the regime. It was reported that on assuming command PEDRAZA personally directed the armed forces and for a few days evidently stirred the morale of the soldiers. The Air Force took to the air and bombed the town of Santa Clara in Las Villas Province, killing hundreds of innocent persons but not doing much material damage to the rebel forces.

BATISTA celebrated New Year's Eve with a group of close "cronies" at his headquarters, Camp Columbia, Havana. At approximately 3:30 A.M. he and his close "henchmen" fled the country,

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

January 15, 1959

some going to the Dominican Republic and some to the United States. Most of those accompanying BATISTA were those who were active in carrying out under his orders a ruthless purge of enemies of the BATISTA regime.

A foreshadowing of BATISTA's sudden disappearance from Cuba was the fact that for approximately two weeks prior to January 1 numerous Cuban officials closely connected with BATISTA made arrangements to secure United States visas for themselves or their families.

Among those leaving with BATISTA were IRENALDO GARCIA BAEZ, Head of Cuban Army Military Intelligence; his father, PILAR GARCIA GARCIA, Head of the Cuban National Police; ORLANDO PIEDRA NEGUERUELA, Head of the Bureau of Investigations of the Cuban National Police; MARIANO FAGET, Head of the Bureau for Repression of Communist Activities (BRAC); and several minor police officials who were considered to have been directly involved in the torture and killing of Cuban citizens during BATISTA's rule.

The word of BATISTA's flight did not become generally known to the people in Havana until about 10:00 A.M. on January 1. Word then rapidly spread throughout the district of Old Havana, and hoodlums began their acts of vandalism. The first things to disappear were all of the parking meters which were smashed and broken by vandals who pocketed the coins contained therein.

Shop windows of luxurious stores were broken and the stores ransacked. Three of the smaller gambling casinos, namely the Plaza, Deauville, and Seville Biltmore, were invaded by mobs and their equipment destroyed. Police continued to be seen on the streets in prowl cars and on foot until approximately 5:00 P.M; however, they did nothing to deter any of the mob action. That evening militia of the July 26 Movement began to take over the police functions in the City of Havana. During the second and third days of the revolution houses of prominent politicians were sacked with the blessing of the July 26 group.

The Embassy immediately began making plans for the evacuation of approximately 2,200 American tourists who were found stranded in Havana. In view of the fact that a general strike had been called in Havana Province by the July 26 Movement during the initial days of the revolution, plans for the evacuation of these tourists proved to be very difficult to finalize. Many of the tourists complained bitterly concerning the lack of foodstuffs in the city and what they termed the inept handling by the Embassy of the making of appropriate arrangements for their departure. The Embassy through liaison with July 26 leaders was able to make arrangements with Cubana de Aviacion, the Key West Ferry, and the Palm Beach Ferry to get all these tourists out of Havana within a four-day period.

January 15, 1959

BATISTA, on his flight from the country, had left a caretaker government head by General EULOGIO CANTILLO PORRAS who formerly had been Commander in Oriente Province; however, on the night of January 1 CANTILLO turned over the armed forces to RAMON BARQUIN who had been freed and brought back to Havana from the Isle of Pines Prison that same date. BARQUIN had been in prison because of an attempted revolt against BATISTA. Although BARQUIN had nominal control of the armed forces, the July 26 militia ruled Havana.

The followers of FIDEL CASTRO immediately took control of all radio and television stations in Havana and through this means of communication exerted much control over popular feeling. Although the 26th of July militia did much to control the looting and sacking in Havana, there were outlying instances where vandals took advantage of an almost chaotic situation. Most people feel, however, that without the forceful entry of the July 26 personnel into the vacuum created by BATISTA's sudden withdrawal from the country, conditions would have been much worse for all the citizenry.

On January 3 Colonel BARQUIN turned over the command of Army forces at Camp Columbia to the July 26 commander, CAMILO CIENFUEGOS, who had arrived from the Second Front on that date. CIENFUEGOS continues to be in charge of this position. BARQUIN himself, although a popular idol, has been relegated to the job of in charge of Army schools.

January 15, 1959

Judge MANUEL URRUTIA took the oath of office as Provisional President on the afternoon of January 2 at Santiago de Cuba. He arrived in Havana on January 5. A planned triumphal entry of URRUTIA into Havana was marred by the fact that followers of the Directorio Revolucionario, who had fought against the BATISTA Government, had seized control of the Presidential Palace and had refused to give it up to the July 26 elements because they felt they had not received adequate representation in the Provisional Government. After several hours of negotiation, however, they finally agreed to vacate the Palace, and late in the evening of January 5 URRUTIA was installed in his new home.

URRUTIA has named the following members of his Cabinet:

Prime Minister	JOSE MIRO CARDONA
State	ROBERTO AGRAMONTE PICHARDO
Treasury	RUFO LOPEZ FRESQUET
Justice	ANGEL FERNANDEZ
Commerce	RAUL CEPERO BONILLA
Public Works	MANUEL RAY RIVERO
Agriculture	HUMBERTO SORI MARIN
Education	ARMANDO HART DAVALOS
Interior	LUIS ORLANDO RODRIGUEZ
Labor	MANUEL FERNANDEZ

January 15, 1959

Public Health	JULIO MARTINEZ PAEZ
Recovery of Misappropriated Assets	FAUSTINO PEREZ HERNANDEZ
Delegate General of the Presidency to the Armed Forces	FIDEL CASTRO RUZ
Secretary to the Presidency	LUIS BUCH RODRIGUEZ

The Cabinet is composed almost completely of adherents of the July 26 Movement, although the Ortodoxo and the Montecristi Groups also are represented. There are no known Communists in the group, and most are young men of unproven experience.

FIDEL CASTRO delayed his triumphal entry into Havana until January 8. It was generally believed that his delay in coming to Cuba's capital was occasioned by fear that members of the Directorio Revolucionario might create incidents to mar his welcome. CASTRO was most impressive in his initial speech in Havana. He was moderate in his approach and asked for all persons to lay down their arms and give their full support to the Provisional Government.

Since that time, however, CASTRO has become more demagogic in his statements and has on several occasions ~~has~~ spoken and acted as though he were the Government. URRUTIA, as Provisional President, has remained in the background and is considered to be a weak man, completely controlled by CASTRO.

January 15, 1959

EXECUTIONS

In the first days of the revolution it was known that a number of adherents to the BATISTA regime were killed in Havana when they attempted to escape the militia patrolling the streets. At the present time there is a planned execution of what the Government forces call BATISTA "murderers" and "informers." To date these executions, which total approximately 200, have taken place in the outlying provinces. In Havana, itself, however, a total of 1,000 persons have been imprisoned and are reportedly awaiting trial. The reaction of Cuban leaders to world-wide comments condemning mass executions has been violent and immediate.

ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA, the 26th of July commander in charge of La Cabana Fortress in Havana, has commented that the Americans who decry these executions should wipe their faces with the pictures of those tortured and killed by BATISTA. FIDEL CASTRO has also been intemperate in his statements against the reaction of some U. S. politicians and newspapermen. CASTRO, himself, on one occasion stated that for those imprisoned in Havana a mass trial for all to see would be held in Havana's Central Park. This office was confidentially advised [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] U. S. Ambassador EARL E. T. SMITH and the Brazilian Ambassador in Havana were instrumental in saving the life of General EULOGIO CANTILLO. According to this source, CANTILLO had been condemned to death and was to have been executed at Camp Columbia by the 26th of July commander CAMILO CIENFUEGOS. FIDEL CASTRO, himself, later explained why he was

January 15, 1959

displeased with CANTILLO. He claimed he had entered into an agreement with CANTILLO during the closing weeks of December, 1958, whereby CANTILLO was to insure that BATISTA and his followers did not leave CUBA. CASTRO claimed that CANTILLO was a traitor for not having kept his word. CANTILLO at present is a prisoner of the Cuban Government at La Cabana Fortress.

COMMUNIST PROGRESS SINCE BATISTA'S FLIGHT

During the first days of the revolution little was heard from the communist element. They did, however, on several occasions during this period attempt to secure radio and television time but were unsuccessful in their endeavors. However, ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA and CAMILO CIENFUEGOS, lieutenants of FIDEL CASTRO, on coming to Cuba announced that they were not anti-communists. Since January 1 the Party has established the publication of its daily newspaper, "HOY." In the National Workers United Front the communists have succeeded in capturing five out of the twenty-two positions on the Executive Committee. The communists also have opened a headquarters in the City of Havana. Some of their members have also been able to secure minor positions in the Provisional Government.

Shortly after the arrival of CAMILO CIENFUEGOS and ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA to Havana, the files of the Bureau for Repression of Communist Activities (BRAC) were transferred from Camp Columbia, where CIENFUEGOS has command, to La Cabana Fortress, which is under the control of ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA. "CHE" GUEVARA announced that he would review these files and then would publicly burn them.

January 15, 1959

ANTI-UNITED STATES FEELING

FIDEL CASTRO in his public statements has not been complimentary toward the United States. He has asked for the recall of the United States Army Missions and in his speeches has derided their qualifications, claiming that they could not have been much good inasmuch as they trained a defeated army, namely the Army of BATISTA. He has publicly stated that he was in favor of asking for a military mission from Venezuela to train Cuba's forces. In a very intemperate remark made on January 15 he stated that if United States Marines were sent to Cuba, "200,000 gringos will die." He later claimed that he made this statement to persons whom he thought were friends and that it was not for publication. ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA is definitely anti-American in his sentiments. The FIDEL CASTRO followers continue to allege that the United States sent arms and munitions to the BATISTA forces to kill fellow Cubans, a charge which has not been true for some time.

The prominent Cuban magazine, "Bohemia", in a special issue of one million copies issued on January 12, 1959, carried a scurrilous and scathing attack against U. S. Ambassador EARL E. T. SMITH. The article was full of half-truths and untruths. It claimed that SMITH was pro-BATISTA because of the fact that

BATISTA gave concessions to big U. S. business. It derided a ball which was given at the Waldorf Astoria in November, 1958, for a scholarship fund sponsored by FLORENCE PRITCHETT SMITH, the Ambassador's wife. Attempts by the Press Officer of the Embassy, after the publication of this article, to contact the magazine's editor proved ineffectual.

CUBAN SENTIMENT TOWARD FIDEL CASTRO

FIDEL CASTRO is Cuba's white hope at the present moment and the idol of the corwds. The old-line Cuban politicians have not come to the forefront to voice any disappointment with policy expounded by CASTRO. CASTRO has given the impression of one who, in his public statements, is able to sway the people. Reliable observers, however, have pointed out that in the numerous statements which CASTRO has issued in the past week in Havana he has lost some prestige. He appears to be over-talkative and one who is willing to give a statement on any situation or problem. His press conferences go on for hours, and it is the feeling of some that he talks too much.

January 15, 1959

CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

1. Top Hoodlums

As a result of the over-throw of the BATISTA Government on January 1, 1959, there has been a general exodus of gamblers and some top hoodlums from Havana. However, the following top hoodlums still remain on the Havana scene, for the admitted purpose of seeing whether they can "deal" with the new Government concerning the resumption of gambling operations in Havana:

~~SANTO~~ TRAFFICANTE, Miami top hoodlum;

~~JACK~~ LANSKY, Miami top hoodlum;

~~CHARLES~~ TOURINE, Miami top hoodlum.

2. Gambling

On January 1, 1959, when law and order were non-existent in Havana, mobs of people sacked and destroyed the gambling casinos in the Hotels Plaza, Deauville, and Sevilla Biltmore. Minor damage was done to the Sans Souci gambling casino. The larger casinos managed to stave off any mob action by having their employees, many of whom were members of the July 26 Movement, block the entry of such mobs and discourage them from doing damage to these larger casinos. All casinos at the present time are closed. There has been a number of announcements

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by Government officials concerning gambling. The most recent statements of Dr. FIDEL CASTRO RUZ indicate that gambling will be permitted in the larger hotels, such as the Riviera, Hilton, and Nacional, as well as in the Sans Souci and Tropicana night clubs. Apparently the smaller "popular" casinos will not be allowed to re-open.

3. "Take"

CASTRO has indicated that the casino profits will be divided as follows:

40 per cent for Cuban charity;
30 " " " tourist promotion;
30 " " " casino operators.

It appears doubtful that any of the larger casinos would re-open under these terms since a profit margin of 30 per cent of the profits for a casino operator would not make a large gambling operation worthwhile. It is known that important American gamblers are bringing pressure to bear on the Government, both through their own personal contacts as well as through the casino employees, in an effort to obtain permission to re-open and at the same time receive a reasonable profit on their investment.

4. Police Tie-Ups With Organized Crime

With the fall of the BATISTA Government all police tie-ups with organized crime ceased. Casino operators have

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indicated that it would be a relief to them to operate their casinos without continual "shake-downs" by various police officials. They have stated that they would be willing to pay a higher percentage of their profits to the Cuban Government provided that the Government can insure there will be no "shake-downs."

5. Other Criminal Activity

No new developments.

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